

GERALD E. CONNOLLY
11TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

327 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1492

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEES:

FEDERAL WORKFORCE, POSTAL SERVICE,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION,
AND PROCUREMENT

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION AND TRADE

MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4611

FAIRFAX OFFICE:

4115 ANNANDALE ROAD
SUITE 103
ANNANDALE, VA 22003
(703) 256-3071

PRINCE WILLIAM OFFICE:

4308 RIDGEWOOD CENTER DRIVE
WOODBIDGE, VA 22192
(703) 670-4989

Mr. John Berry
Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E. St NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Mr. Berry,

I am writing to gain a better understanding of the role that Metro's operating status played in your decisions to close federal agencies in the National Capital Region on February 5, 8, and 9. I have long held that, given Metro's status as the primary transit system serving our nation's capital, the federal government has a special responsibility to ensure its continued ability to operate effectively and efficiently. But reports that the cost of closing federal agencies in the National Capital region is estimated at \$100 million a day, and the possibility that Metro's reduced levels of service during and after the storm necessitated the federal shutdown, suggest that the federal government has not just a responsibility, but a financial incentive to invest in Metro's capital and operating costs.

As you know, Metro is unable to operate the many above ground portions of its rail lines when snow depth exceeds eight inches and covers the third rail. Metro uses a snow blower and a specialized train car attachment to clear the third rail of snow and ice. This process requires expensive equipment and is labor intensive. In fact, 72 hours after the first snow storm ended on Saturday, February 6, it had not been completed on much of the system's above ground track. Consequently, Metro rail service was severely limited on Monday, February 8 and somewhat limited on Tuesday, February 9.

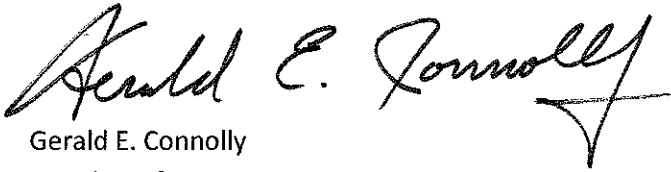
Given these facts, I would appreciate if you could answer a few questions:

1. Can you please describe the decision-making process and timeline that you undertake to reach the decision to close federal agencies?
2. In general, what role does Metro's operating status play in that process? Specifically, what role did Metro's limited operating status play in recent closure decisions?

3. Is it your opinion that if Metro had the ability to respond faster to these types of weather emergencies, we could potentially avoid or limit the need to fully shut down National Capital Region federal agencies?

Through better understanding the factors that influence the decision-making process, I hope that we can identify opportunities to better mitigate these extreme weather conditions or other unexpected events that pose a threat to the continued, safe operations of the federal government and cost hundreds of millions of dollars in lost productivity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerald E. Connolly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "G" and "C".

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress
11th District, Virginia